

## The battle of Wadi Mabuk

### Abstract

Forward by Gideon Avidor

The fighting in the Canal sector did not resemble anything known or planned by the I.D.F. Beforehand. The enemy fought in a manner unknown to us previously – the enemy's exploitation of the area in such a way was unexpected. Furthermore, the forces and materials at the I.D.F.'s disposal were unsuitable to such fighting conditions.

In previous maneuvers and war games, the General Staff assumed that an Egyptian crossing would be their opening gambit. Still, nobody took it seriously enough to think it demanded a response, whether technical, organizational, or doctrinal, or that the divisional or General Staff level would be called upon in the future to cope with such a situation. The I.D.F. did not have a defense battle doctrine, and what was, in theory, had never been practiced or adapted to actual, real-life situations.

Solutions had to be created during fighting in the field, by trial and error.

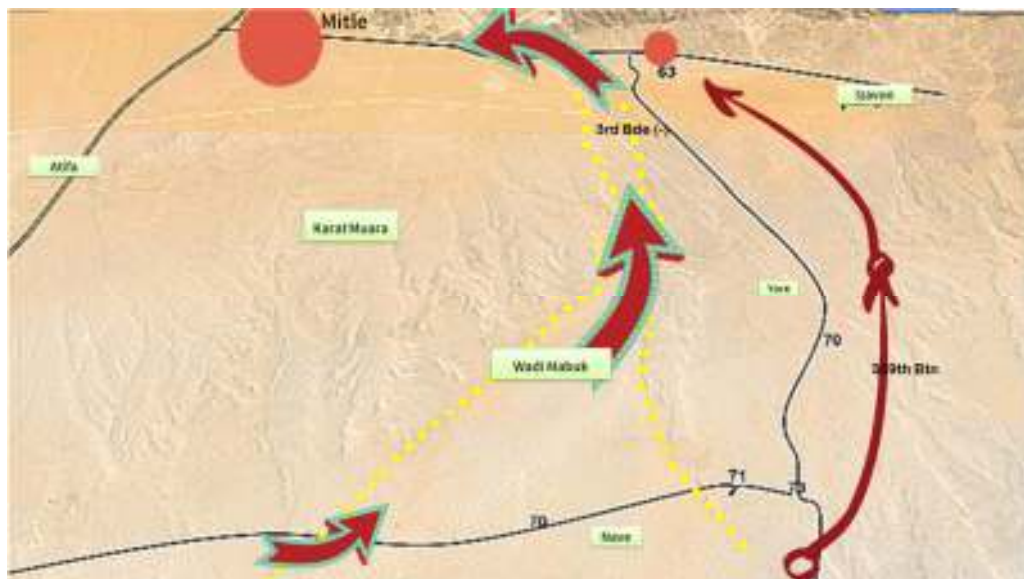


Figure 1- Third Army Plan - Oct. 14

On the tactical level, the tank commanders were those who had to face anti-tank threats with evasive maneuvers and fire management, particularly of the isolated tank, and partially in the tactical framework of including battle intelligence (observation) in firing battles and integrating infantry and artillery in mobile battles.

The Egyptians decided to attack this sector with an armored brigade reinforced by a Mechanized Infantry battalion. The attack commanded by the Fourth Armored Division commander, who crossed over from the western bank to the assembly areas on the eastern bank the previous day together with the brigade and the battalion. (The Egyptians also attacked in the division's northern sector, that of the 164<sup>th</sup> Brigade, on the "Poreret" Road with the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade reinforced by a tank battalion from the 25<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade.)

The 252<sup>nd</sup> Division, in whose sector the attack took place, was aware of the imminent attack and deployed to face it. The division expected that the armored division would attack on one of the main roads/axis in the sector, the Mitle Road/Axis, the GIDI Axis or both of them .

The division saw the "Yore" Road as securing the flank; from the outbreak of the war, there was no significant war activity there. When the 202<sup>nd</sup> Paratrooper Battalion entered the divisional area, it took positions at "Naveh" Junction to secure the flank and protect the sector from Egyptian infiltration.

The attack came as a surprise to the division. The Division commander and three brigades' commanders deploy to block the anticipated Egyptian attack in the central and northern divisional sectors, a battle developed in the southern area under the command of the divisional operations officer .

At that area a battle developed in which three maneuvering battalions took part (the 202<sup>nd</sup>, the 46<sup>th</sup> , and the 89<sup>th</sup> ), each from a different brigade, an Artillery Regiment (the 209<sup>th</sup> )

with three artillery battalions, air support (69 sorties) and logistic support (the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade).

The battle was improvised, hastily managed, and fought on the move; it was division-level regarding command but battalion-level in the fighting sector, starting with a surprise and ending with a "knock-out".

### **The course of the battle**

Operational background of the fight in the 252<sup>nd</sup> Division's southern sector

The 252<sup>nd</sup> Division's area extended from the center of the Bitter Lake to three Km south of the "Yore" Road .

South of the divisional sector was the "Marshal" area. The closest force in that sector was the 35th Brigade that station at Ras Sudar and other small troops deployed in the area, especially opposite Ayun Musa, from which the Egyptians attempted from time to time to move southwards in the direction of Ras Sudar and Abu Rhodes .

### **The division's mission**

The division's mission was to prevent the Egyptian Army from breaking to the east .

Our positions were as far west as possible, without entering into massive, exhaustive battles.

We maintain a "long-range" firing position to retain contact and place continued pressure on the Egyptians .

The divisional battle order included the:

401<sup>st</sup> Armored Brigade commanded by Col. Dan Shomron

The 164<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade commanded by Col. Avraham Bar'am

The 875<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Brigade (two Mechanized Infantry battalions and a Sherman tank battalion) commanded by Col. Aryeh Dayan

The 209<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment commanded by Col. Ya'akov Erez

"Bishof " Force (an infantry brigade) commanded by Col. Haim Binyamini.

The size of the forces did not enable a continued presence along the whole width of the sector. Some of the areas only covered by observations. We plan to divert forces to areas that not defined as essential or dominating



Figure 2- The Terrain

The division deployed its forces with two armored brigades forward and a Mechanized Infantry brigade in reserve, a Mechanized Infantry battalion dug in in the Gidi Junction exit area, and an Mechanized Infantry battalion dug in in the Akavish area .

Two of the 875<sup>th</sup> Brigade's Mechanized Infantry battalions deployed one at the exit of the Yore Road and the other at the exit of the Gidi Road; since the 35<sup>th</sup> Paratroopers Brigade no longer flown to Ras Sudar, the 202<sup>nd</sup> Paratrooper Battalion assigned to the division's command on October 11.

When it became there was Egyptian activity at the "Naveh"- "Yore" Junction, the division commander decided to reinforce that flank and making it as a divisional sector. It meant to reinforce the tank company that was active in the sector and released the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade to concentrate on fighting on the "Atifa" Road, which considered the main Egyptian attack road.

### **The 252<sup>nd</sup> Division and its deployment towards the attack**

#### **The Headquarters and the Forward Command Team (F.C.T. )**

With the outbreak of the war, the 252<sup>nd</sup> Division was in-charge of the entire Suez Canal front under the Southern Command. The Division headquarters was in Refidim With the transfer of command of the Northern sector to the 162<sup>nd</sup> Division and the Central sector to the 143<sup>rd</sup> Division in October 7 afternoon, the division sent a F.C.T. to the southern sector, to the western entrance to the Mitle Pass .

The F.C.T. was a mobile body that broke off from the main headquarters. The structure of the F.C.T. based on five M113 A.P.C.s ( command, artillery, intelligence, communication, security) and two 4 by 4 vehicles for the Division commander and the Artillery Regiment commander.

The team consist of MG. Avraham (Albert) Mendler, the Division Operations officer (G3) Ltc. Gideon Avidor, the Division Artillery commander, Col. Ya'akov Erez, the Division intelligence officer (G2) Ltc. Yossi Tayar-Tamir, and the Division signals officer, Ltc. Ya'en Vered . and few other officers and NCOs.

### **Managing the Division battle**

During daytime hours, the division commander met up with the brigade commanders in their forward positions using an A.P.C. s and one 4-by-4 vehicle, occasionally with the

addition of a helicopter - while the ongoing battle management performed by the F.C.T. from the Mitle position .

Every day, with the division commander's return from the field to the F.C.T. , generally at nightfall, a situation assessment made, and decisions taken regarding the next day's fighting procedure and those to follow.

### **The deployment on the "Yore" Road**

The 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (a paratrooper battalion mounting on M3 half-tracks) assigned a sector as "flank security". Its mission was to occupy the "Naveh"- "Yore" Junction and hold onto it, "to keep an eye" on the sector and to prevent the Egyptians from taking over the Artillery Road ("Nave" Road).

### **The 89<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Battalion's deployment**

The 89<sup>th</sup> Battalion commanded by Lt. Yitzhak Shoshani included two Mechanized Infantry companies, "Z" and "H," .

The battalion deployed in the "Akbarosh" enclosure on the "Izavon" Road, its mission was blocking the road to the southwest.

Its heavy weaponry was an 81mm mortar platoon (four barrels) and three 20mm guns mounted on M3 half-tracks. .

### **October 13 - A dark day**

October 13 was one of the division's most difficult days. After a failed attempt to rescue the men from the "Pier" stronghold on the Suez Canal line on October 11 by sea, there was no way to reach them .

On the morning of October 13, it decided that they would surrender in an orderly fashion with the intervention of the Red Cross .

The final decision made at 1000 hours, and afterward, the division commander left the headquarters for a tour of the 164<sup>th</sup> Brigade. His A.P.C. sent to the "Poreret" Road, and he arrived there by helicopter .

At that time, the Egyptian 11<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Brigade attacked the sector supported by artillery; in the artillery attack, the division commander's vehicle hit and MG. Albert Mendler killed .

He replaced by MG. Kalman Magen, who arrived at the division command post around 1800 hours in time for preparation for the next day anticipated battle. The Southern Command that tomorrow (October 14) an attack by the Egyptian Forth Armored Division is expected alerted the Division.

Upon his arrival MG. Kalman Magen conducted situation assessment, , it estimated that tomorrow battle would take place on the "Poreret" Road and that the 164<sup>th</sup> and 401<sup>st</sup> Brigades would deployed towards it .

On October 14 at dawn, the division commander joined the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade in anticipation of the coming battle .

#### **October 14 – The day of the battle**

On October 14, the order of the division force was as follows:

The 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade (53 M60 tanks) three battalions: the 195<sup>th</sup>, the 52<sup>nd</sup>, and the 49<sup>th</sup>.

The 164<sup>th</sup> Brigade (52 Centurion tanks) two battalions: the 104<sup>th</sup> and the 106<sup>th</sup>.

The 875<sup>th</sup> Brigade (30 Sherman tanks) one tank battalion: (the 128<sup>th</sup>) and two Mechanized Infantry battalions – the 89<sup>th</sup> and the 186<sup>th</sup>.

The 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion – (seven M60 and Centurion tanks): two paratrooper companies and a Support company.

The 209<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment: five artillery battalions, one 120mm mortar battalion

The "Bishop " Force – an infantry battalion from the Officers' school.

### **The Egyptian plan**

LTG Abd al-Muneim Wasl, the Third Army commander, wrote a book "The Arab Israeli Conflict" in which he discuss that battle: (From the memories of LTG Abd al-Muneim Maktaba al-Suruq al-Dawliyah, Cairo (2002) pp. 216-222 (Arabic).)

"According to President Anwar al-Sadat's, instructions, the High Command of the Armed Forces decided on October 12, 1973, to develop an attack eastwards and pressure the I.D.F. force them to ease the I.D.F. pressure on the Syrian forces on the Golan .

...On the eve of October 12, the orders arrived to develop the attack towards the mountain passes, the hour of the attack was set to the October 14 morning, " .

### **The Third Army's battle plan**

"The Third Army's situation at 1800 hours on October 12, 1973 was as follows :

The first echelon of the army east of the Canal – on the Al-Shat-Mitle Road had 149 tanks fit for battle :The Seven Infantry Division (commanded by B.G. Ahmad Badawi).

The 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (commanded by B.G. Yusuf Afifi Mohammed)

The second echelon of the army west of the Canal:

The Fourth Armored Division (commanded by B.G. Abd Al Aziz Kabil)

The Six Mechanized Infantry Division (commanded by B.G. Mohammad Abul Fath Muharram).



" I created a plan to develop the attack towards the mountain passes in the Third Army's sector as follows:

" Leave the 19<sup>th</sup> Division's bridgehead unchanged and to attack with the Four Armored Division, from the army's second echelon, which until that time had been located west of the Suez Canal and had not participated in the fighting.

The Third Armored Brigade would mount an attack from the 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's bridgehead.

The 339<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Battalion would mount an attack from the 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's bridgehead, on the right flank of the Third Armored Brigade through Wadi Mabuk to reach the Mitle Pass.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Brigade from the Seven Mechanized Infantry Division would mount its attack from the Seven Infantry Division's bridgehead towards the Gidi Pass".

#### **The battle from an Egyptian viewpoint**

M.G. Wasel, the Army's commander:

"For fifteen minutes, the artillery bombarded visible enemy targets in the sector and on the advance line flanks.

The brigade mounted its attack, as well as the 339<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Battalion.

Despite all the preparations for the attack, the Third Armored Brigade did not succeed in carrying it out, although it reached a distance of seven Km west of the Mitle Pass. Having left the range of air cover, it entered an enemy anti-tank ambush; thus, it suffered many enemy air attacks.

M.G. Jamal Hammad: (MG. Jamal Hammad, describe the battle in his book: "The war battles on the Egyptian front". Dar al-Shuruq, Cairo (2002), pp, 252-258 (Arabic).)

An airstrike was supposed to take place at the opening of the attack but did not materialize since contact not made with the ground-to-air missile units that transferred to the eastern bank of the Canal before first light on 14 October. Thus, the brigade remained without air cover or air defense.

At the appointed time, the artillery units opened a 15-minute bombardment to secure the brigade's movement, but it did not have any effect since there were no defined targets, and intelligence was very scarce.

At 0630 on the morning of 14 October, the brigade's units began crossing the opening line from the 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's bridgehead, under the command of the Fourth Armored Division's Commander and his command team. The brigade advanced in two echelons: the first made up of two tank battalions reinforced by two Mechanized Infantry companies. The second included a tank battalion minus one company. The brigade's reserve included its Mechanized Infantry battalion minus two platoons".

#### **The Israeli viewpoint, 0600-0800**

The attack took the division by surprise. The sector considered not vulnerable, and the force stationed there was a paratrooper unit meant to secure the flank and not a force that was capable of blocking Egyptian armored attacks.

On October 14 at 0635 hours, the F.C.T. received a warning from the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade's intelligence that Observation Post 215 "F" had sighted vehicles movement from the area south of "Polygon" east of Wadi Mabuk. The F.C.T. checked with the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade's observation posts (on the Karat Murah ridge) and with the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and discovered that they had seen nothing. The 215 "F" observation post continued its warning, and at 0650 hours, the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's ""C" " Company reported that tanks passing by it and entering the Wadi; a "general alarm" sounded.

The 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion CO, Lt. Doron Rubin describes the events thus :

"At 0650, as I am walking around, I see that they are signaling me to return immediately. I run back and hear Israel Meir reporting to me that tanks are moving from the north in his direction in big numbers and he advises me to fold".

Maj. Israel Meir, who commanded the paratrooper company west of "Naveh 71" reports:

"In the morning, I picked up my binoculars and didn't see anything. Total silence. Suddenly the entire desert began moving. I saw tanks on "Naveh" breaking southwards directly at us."

The 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion activated the effective power it had (seven tanks, five recoilless guns, and eight mortars) in an attempt to block the Egyptian advance, but without result, they passed by the battalion and penetrated deeply into the area.

These reports alerted the division. At that hour, the 46th Battalion of the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade commanded by Maj. David Shoval positioned at the Mitle Junction. They were in the process of reorganizing: tanks serviced, soldiers showering, phoning home, and performing such activities as were done between battles

The division ordered the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade's commander to send out immediately a tank company towards "Izavon 62", the meeting point between Wadi Mabuk and the road .

The 46th Battalion's commander Maj. David Shoval describes it thus:

"Around 0630, we began hearing over the radio network about clouds of dust – we understood that something was happening. We had planned on a day of reorganization. I told Yaron ("C" Tank Company CO) to close down everything and prepare the tanks to move out, and a quarter of an hour later, I ordered him to proceed to the ridge dominating Wadi Mabuk south of "Yichiel ."

It took him 20 minutes to organize; I went out with him and I told Ira ("B" Tank Company CO) to arrange to move out. I advised Col. Dan Shomron (the 401<sup>st</sup> brigade CO) that I was sending Yaron and Ira as well to deploy north of Wadi Mabuk and I am going with them

Yaron started moving out at around 0700 hours, Ira about 30 minutes later. I moved out with Yaron, and within half an hour of traveling we were in position, I was about one or two Km behind Yaron, who opened fire before I arrived".

Lt. Yaron Ram, "C" Company commander reported:

"The entire battalion stood under camouflage nets in the day lager area. At about 0700 hours, we told that Egyptian armor had sighted .

The instructions were to move to Wadi Mabuk because the Egyptians were advancing quickly through the Wadi. The G3, the division's operations officer, entered my radio net and began asking what was happening. We arrived at "Izavon 62", where we could already see lots of dust from the area near "point 143".

Ltc. Doron Rubin the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion commander describe:

"I took three tanks and sent them above Wadi Mabuk to go and knock them out from the flank; I sent two recoilless guns, so I remained with two recoilless guns.

I took a half-track and began running in the direction of Israel Meir (the company CO). After 200 meters, I sank into the sand, and then I saw dozens of tanks and an infantry force coming towards us. I reported to the division what was happening... I divided the sector – the battalion deputy commander in charge of the right side and I took Israel Meir's sector.

The recoilless gun platoon and the tank platoon reported that within the Wadi, they see a column of tanks and trucks moving eastwards".

The Egyptian Third Brigade was moving steadily through the Wadi, where the 89th Mechanized Infantry Battalion was positioned to defend "Akbarosh" in the area connecting Wadi Mabuk and the "Izavon" road.

Maj. Itai Margalit "H" Company commander. :

"There were two companies in the battalion, an 81mm mortar platoon and three 20 mm guns. We spread out two companies along the front in a southwesterly direction, one on the hills east of "Izavon ," and the other west of the road.

"Yonatan Geva's (commander of 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade. Observation team) passed us as they retreated from their positions and told us: "You'd better escape – the Egyptians are coming."

Our observation post reported that it saw a dust cloud in the– the battalion commander instructed us to direct bazookas in that direction. When the Egyptian tanks arrived about a Km away from our positions, C" Company from the 46th Battalion's arrived from the north. The Egyptians assumed positions from the Wadi northwards and fired about 20–30 tank rounds at us. We saw Yaron's platoon cross the Wadi about 800 meters from the Egyptian tanks .

At around 1030 we saw Phantoms aircraft dropping cluster bombs – later we saw that they had destroyed an Egyptian D30 artillery battery. The Egyptian retreat began after the air attack".

Ltc. David Shoal the 46th Battalion commander, :

"When I arrived, I saw about 30-50 tanks moving through the Wadi . Yaron was on the left, and I directed Ira to stand to the right, west of me. Yaron fired on the nearest tanks. When I arrived, one or two had already hit and had begun burning. When Ira joined us, the two companies were firing. I divided the sector between them –I also fired about 14 shells from my tank.

We were in ideal firing positions; they seemed to be in a range of 1000-3000 m from us spreading out through the Wadi. They drove like idiots, spread out across the Wadi.

This firing continued for an hour or two. The whole time they did not fire on us. By the end, I saw 30 burning targets."

Ltc. Doron Rubin the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion commander,;

"The 81mm mortar platoon fired at the tail of the Tank brigade and on 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion forces that were near the battalion enclosure.

We all worked with the same radio network, so there were problems when many people spiking at the same time, but everyone was in the picture, and the network did not jammed. I reported to the division, telling them that I needed ammunition for the tanks, the 81mm and the 120mm mortars.

I received artillery support from the division.

I requested reinforcements from the division. I was told that a tank company being sent from the Mitle Road to Wadi Mabuk."

At about 1000 hours, that phase of the battle ended. The division instructed the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's tank platoon to return to the "Naveh"- "Yore" Junction.

The 89<sup>th</sup> Battalion ordered to search the Wadi and destroy whatever remained of the Egyptian force; the 46th Battalion ordered to cross the Wadi southwards towards the "Ze'eva" Road and search the area; and the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion ordered to search the area .in his vicinity.

### **The Egyptian 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

The Egyptian 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion left the Ayun Musa area on its way to Wadi Mabuk with the mission of moving along the Third brigade's right (southern) flank. The "Naveh"- "Yore" Junction was not target by the Egyptian attack .

However, the force stationed there interfered with their advance plan and the 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which included three B.T.R. companies and a tank company (from the Third Brigade), began shooting on the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's tanks that were firing on it from their positions.

However, it did not attempt to storm and occupy the junction.

The Egyptian 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion commander lost control and direction; its forces split up, some of them, with the CO, continued towards the "Ze'eva" and "Hannibal" axis, where the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, during that afternoon and the next day, finished the job, destroying the remains of the battalion and taking the CO. prisoner.

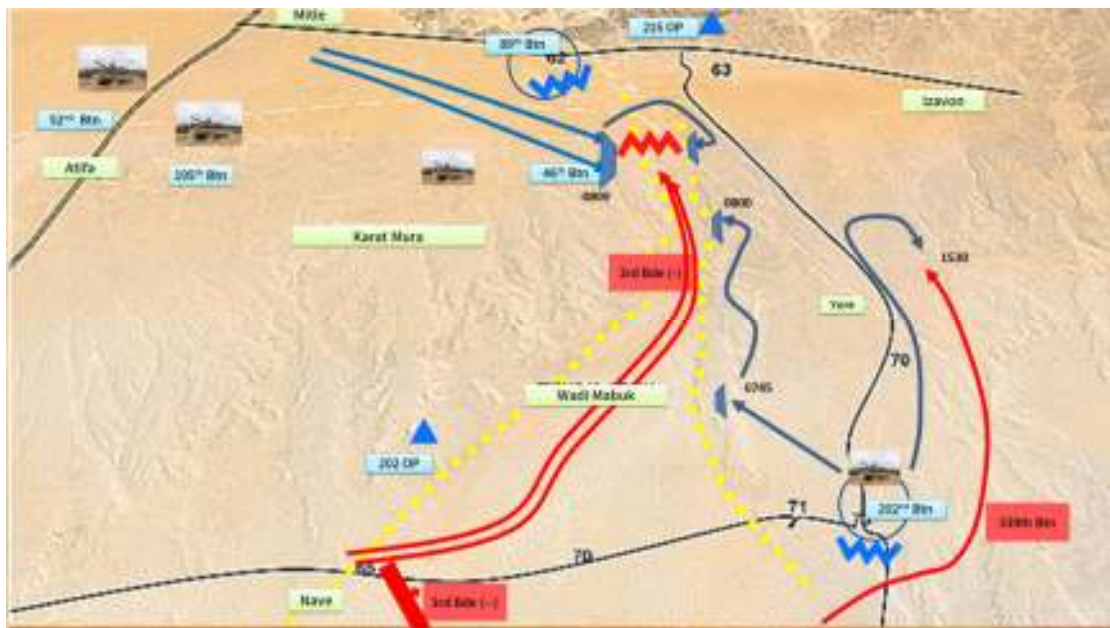


Figure 4 - The Battle maneuvers

**1200-1700 hours – The Egyptian retreat and the area is clear**

The Division attention began shifting to the Gidi Road (the 164<sup>th</sup> Brigade) where a brigade-level attack developed by the Egyptian 11<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Brigade reinforced by a tank battalion from the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade.

### **The fire support effort**

Immediately with the opening of the battle, the division mounted a fire effort with all the means at its disposal: mortars, guns and air support.

As early as 0700 hours the division requested air support and the Air Force jets began their attack 45 minutes later. The 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion did not have radio equipment for air-land communication and the attack method was by the division establishing a line that west of it where the air force conducted free attacks.

A key participant in the battle was the 209<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment commanded by Col. Ya'akov Erez, at the division's F.C.T. , including the air support liaison officer who was a member of the Division F.C.T. .

Col. Ya'akov Erez, the Artillery Regiment commander describes it:

"Most of the work was done by the air force. When the jets arrived, they requested that we not direct them ... that we should let them work. They worked there attacking freely for a long time and caused considerable losses"...

The air force attacks had a significant effect on the Egyptian force, regarding both morale and physical damage incurred on the advancing force.

### **The battle end**

What started unexpectedly and with high potential for chaos ended with a great victory. The Egyptian Third armored Brigade and the 339<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Battalion signed-out from the Egyptian forces.



A number of factors led to the success, first and foremost, initiative and professionalism at all levels: in the battalions (the 202<sup>nd</sup>, the 46<sup>th</sup> and the 89<sup>th</sup>), the combat intelligence system deployed by the 401st Brigade, the logistic support delivering ammunition to the battling units during the fighting, and the Division F.C.T. that manage and coordinated the battle.

The Egyptians also contributed much to this victory by unimaginative and unprofessional management, on the systemic, tactical and techno-tactical levels. The havoc wrought on the Egyptian commanders, especially the Brigade CO, knocked the brigade off balance and, in effect, halted the entire assault. From that phase, the Egyptians were "every man for himself." Attempts of the chief of staff and the brigade's second echelon to come to their aid did not come to fruition .

Whereas on the Israeli side, the fighting characterized by initiative and steadiness of purpose, on the Egyptian side, the fighting came to a standstill, and the commanders searched for solutions in the higher echelons. Still, until these materialized, they had no choice but to retreat.

The Egyptian 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which was surprised by the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's presence at the "Naveh"- "Yore " Junction, fell apart before the battle got underway. Its forces scattered in all directions, some of them remaining to return fire at the junction, others moving with the battalion commander towards the "Ze'eva" Road southeast of the "Yore " Road and finally surrendering or being decimated almost without resistance.

### **Command and control**

There were two deviations from standard battle procedures. The first involved divisional battle management :

This battle combined of a tank battalion, an Mechanized Infantry battalion, an paratroopers battalion, an artillery regiment, brigade-level combat intelligence, brigade-level logistics, and air support, all of which were managed by the Division's F.C.T. , while the Division commander was, waiting for the Egyptians main attack in a different sector (where the Egyptian 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade did indeed attack towards noon).

The battle was in an area of ten square kilometers against a reinforced Egyptian armored brigade, over two separate battle zones, the "Naveh"- "Yore" Junction area and the "Akavish- "Izavon 62" area and Wadi Mabuk, where the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the 89<sup>th</sup> Battalion were active.

Air support conducted with no communication with the forces on the ground.

The fighting took place in a part of the Division control without a unique commanding network since the divisional operational network dedicated to the preparations for the expected Egyptian's main attack. The battle managed by entry into the units' networks, under the direction, coordination and control of the Division F.C.T.

The various areas of operations were determined in such a way that each force had its own sector, independent of other forces' activities, while its commander had the authority and freedom of action with a minimum of outside intervention.

All commanders possessed a very high level of professionalism and excellence.

The forces instructed by the F.C.T. to enter the communications networks of adjacent forces, and in certain cases, the Divisional team itself utilized company-level networks in order to coordinate movements and fire when forces from different bodies were active next to one another .

Supplying ammunition done by the 401<sup>st</sup> Brigade; in the absence of its Division Main HQ and Division logistics officer, coordination successfully performed by the F.C.T.

The second exception was the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's battle management:

The battle created a number of command and control problems for the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's CO.

The effective forces at his disposal were two tank platoons, a recoilless gun platoon, a 120 mm Mortar battery, and an 81-mm Mortar platoon. They were all concentrated at the "Naveh"- "Yore" Junction.

The Egyptians attacked on two axes: the Third Brigade in a range of eight to ten Km north of the battalion and the 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the area of the junction itself and afterward southeast of it.

The battalion commander forced to split the forces beyond his ability to control them physically. He sent a tank platoon and a pair of recoilless guns towards the Third Brigade that was advancing through the Wadi and remained to fight at the junction with a tank platoon, two recoilless guns and a mortar platoon and battery.

The tank platoon remained at the junction, could not maneuver since it defended the junction, and blocked the 339<sup>th</sup> Battalion's progress. The paratroopers' companies were useless in that battle. Although they were located in the area of the junction, they did not use their weapons throughout the battle.

The battalion commander managed the sporadic fighting as individual management, with personal bravery and endless initiative. He attempted to be everywhere at once.

In an inquiry after the war, the 202<sup>nd</sup> Battalion CO, Doron Rubin stated :

"The battle was not managed at the battalion level, but everyone did what he thought was right, and it seems to me today as the best thing that happened in that war from every point of view".

**The Battle in Numbers**

**I.D.F. Forces:**

202<sup>nd</sup> Paratroopers Battalion (2 Paratroopers Companies, 1 Support Company, 7 tanks)

89<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Battalion (2 Mech. companies)

46<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion (2 Tank Companies – 29 tanks)

209<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment (2 155mm SP Btn, 175mm SP Btn, 120mm SP Mortar Battery)

Air Force 61 sorties

**Egyptians forces:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Brigade (3 Tank Battalions, Mechanized Battalion, D30 (122mm) Artillery Battalion).

**Casualties:**

I.D.F. :

KIA - 6

3<sup>rd</sup> Bde:

KIA - unknown

Two Tank Battalions (60 tanks)

Mechanized Battalion (30 vehicles)

D30 Artillery Battalion (3 122mm Batteries)